

REMARKS

Claims 1-35 currently appear in this application. The Office Action of August 18, 2006, has been carefully studied. These claims define novel and unobvious subject matter under Sections 102 and 103 of 35 U.S.C., and therefore should be allowed. Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration, entry of the present amendment, and formal allowance of the claims.

Restriction has been required among what the Examiner considers to be patentably distinct species of the invention, as follows:

Group I, drawn to a method of treating hepatic disease or improving liver function comprising administering a composition comprising valine, presently comprising claims 1-11 and 22-24; and

Group II, drawn to a kit comprising valine, presently comprising claims 12-21 and 25.

Applicant hereby elects Group I, claims 1-11 and 22-24 and new claims 26-35. Applicant hereby elects hypoalbuminemia as a species. Claim 32 is drawn to this species. Support for these new claims is found in the specification as filed at Tables 1, 2 and 4 on pages 13, 14 and 17.

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If the restriction requirement is maintained, it will be clear on the record that the PTO considers the groups to be patentably distinct from one another i.e., *prima facie non-obvious* from one another. This means that a reference identical to the one group would not render the other group *prima facie* obvious.

Favorable consideration and examination of all pending claims on the merits are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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